

Clarithromycin

kla-RITH-roe-mye-sin

Brand Name: Biaxin

Clarithromycin, also known as Biaxin, belongs to the class of medicines known as antibacterials or antibiotics. These medicines fight bacteria (small organisms that can cause infection in humans) or stop bacteria from growing. Clarithromycin controls the infection and allows the body's immune system to kill the bacteria. Clarithromycin is used to fight many common bacteria that cause sore throat, ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, and skin infections. Clarithromycin can also be used to treat some stomach ulcers.

HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

Clarithromycin is used to prevent and treat *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) disease. MAC is an opportunistic infection caused by either *Mycobacterium avium* or *Mycobacterium intracellulare*, two different bacteria. Opportunistic infections are more common in people with weakened immune systems, including those with HIV or AIDS.

Clarithromycin was approved by the FDA for treatment of MAC on December 23, 1993, and for the prevention of MAC on October 12, 1995. Different doses of the drug may be needed for treatment and prevention. When used for treatment of MAC, clarithromycin should be used together with other antibacterial drugs.

Dosage Information

Clarithromycin comes in tablet and liquid forms. Both forms are taken by mouth and may be taken with or without food.

Contraindications

Individuals with kidney disease should tell a doctor before taking this medicine.

Clarithromycin should not be taken with astemizole (Hismanal), cisapride (Propulsid), pimozone (Orap), or terfenadine (Seldane).

Clarithromycin should not be used during pregnancy unless no other drugs will work against the infection.

Possible Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, clarithromycin can, in rare cases, cause some serious unwanted effects. Patients should notify a doctor right away if they have severe abdominal pain, fever, severe nausea

and vomiting, unusual bleeding or bruising, watery or bloody diarrhea, yellow skin or eyes, or skin rash and itching.

Other side effects may not be serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use of clarithromycin. Less serious side effects include diarrhea, headache, nausea, and vomiting.

Drug and Food Interactions

A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), and herbal medications, especially astemizole (Hismanal), blood thinners, carbamazepine (Tegretol), cisapride (Propulsid), digoxin (Lanoxin), pimozone (Orap), rifabutin (Mycobutin), rifampin (Rifadin), terfenadine (Seldane), theophylline (Theodur, Slo-Bid), and anti-HIV drugs.

Clinical Trials

For information on clinical trials that involve Clarithromycin, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Clarithromycin AND HIV Infections.

Manufacturer Information

Clarithromycin
Abbott Laboratories
One Hundred Abbott Park Rd
Abbott Park, IL 60064-3500
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Biaxin
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For More Information

Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health Information Specialist:

- Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET
- Via Live Help: http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET